

*Bill To Name GMNF's White Rocks National Recreation Area
In Honor Of Former Vermont Senator Heads To President's Desk For Signature As The First
Bill Passed By New Congress*

Washington, DC -- The House of Representatives Friday passed a bill to name Vermont's White Rocks National Recreation Area in honor of Sen. Robert Stafford (R), who died in December.

It was the first legislative measure shepherded through the 110th Congress by Vermont's sole delegate in the House, Rep. Peter Welch (D). With House passage, the bill became the first bill to be approved by the Senate and the House in the new Congress.

The bill, introduced in the Senate Thursday - the first day of the new 110th Congress - by Sens. Patrick Leahy (D) and Bernie Sanders (I), moved quickly through that chamber and passed Thursday night, becoming the first bill passed by the Senate in the new Congress.

With Friday's passage in the House, it now heads to the President for his signature.

The recreation area, in Rutland and Bennington Counties, encompasses 22,758 acres and will be known as The Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area. It was designated a National Recreation Area in the 1984 Wilderness Act, which Stafford largely wrote.

Leahy said, "This bill is a fitting and enduring tribute to Bob Stafford, and so is the way it was passed. This was an effort in bipartisanship that I hope will help signal a new attitude and direction in the new Congress."

Sanders said, "I am very pleased that the Vermont delegation made legislation honoring Bob Stafford the first bill to pass through both houses in the 110th Congress. It is a fitting tribute to Senator Stafford's dedicated service that members from both sides of the aisle came together so quickly to recognize his outstanding contributions and rename the Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area."

Welch said, "I can think of no more appropriate honor to the great legacy and service of Bob Stafford than this bipartisan bill, the first bill sent to our President for his signature. I am proud our Vermont delegation was able to succeed in this fitting tribute to a great Vermonter."